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in 1868, when he also published a variety of articles in different Paris newspapers. And as his books were now selling fairly well, he began to think of giving some filment to an old and once vague project, to which the example of Balzac's works had at last imparted shape. Writing 1867, his friend May, to Valabregue, he had then said: " By the way, have you read all Balzac a man he was! I arn reperusing him at this moment. my mind, Victor Hugo and the others dwindle away him, I am thinking of a book on Balzac, a great study, a kind of real romance."

That book was never written, but the perusal of "La Come'die Humaine" and its haunting influence at least largely inspired "Les Rougon-Macquart."